Chapter Overview

Good supervisors are able to think and act responsibly, work cooperatively with others, and provide their staff with opportunities through which they can work together effectively and derive satisfaction within the group. These supervisors have the basic knowledge of social work theory, values, methods, and techniques. They also have the capacity to facilitate the professional and personal growth of their staff.

Effective methods of supervision are adapted to the individuality of each Children's Service Worker and to the group as a whole. Thus, good supervisors are able to identify an individual's learning needs in relation to the job requirements and professional experience. They use this information to develop training materials and appropriate teaching methods relative to the specific needs of the workers.

There are a number of specific skills and techniques that are of special importance to a supervisor. This chapter identifies some of them and describes how they can be used to increase supervisory effectiveness.

Enhancing the Supervisor/Children's Service Worker Relationship

Supervisors are the most visible and accessible role models for Children's Service Workers. By actions and words, supervisors can implicitly and explicitly establish the limits of permissible behavior. Further, modeling provides workers with non-threatening opportunities to introduce new behaviors.

The basic question which the supervisor must ask is: "How do I want Children's Service Workers to relate to families?" Despite the need to temper one's response according to different circumstances, there are some guidelines that can be established. These guidelines indicate that a good supervisor/ worker relationship has the following characteristics, that will hopefully be carried over into the worker/client relation-ship.

- **Cooperation and Mutuality**

  Ideally, ideas, opinions, and solutions to problems should be contributed by both the supervisor and the Children's Service Worker. Supervisors who permit and encourage cooperation and mutuality with workers provide an effective model for these behavioral characteristics between the worker and client.

  This concept is particularly important since most Children's Service Worker/client relationships are involuntary. Parents may often feel that the worker is disrupting their privacy. Cooperation and mutuality may help break down the threatened, defensive behaviors of the family, and help initiate a more positive relationship.

- **Explicitness and Honesty**

  To the maximum extent possible, communication between supervisors and Children's Service Workers should be clear, unambiguous, and concrete. Above all, communications must be honest and frank. On occasion, workers and supervisors will withhold information or opinions from each other. For example, workers may withhold information regarding the nature of a specific report, believing that they are doing the supervisor a favor by not burdening him/her all at once. In the same way, supervisors may decline to discuss certain questionable aspects of the worker's performance in the belief that such a discussion might undermine his/her confidence.

  While there may be times when discussion of certain issues would be inappropriate (i.e., it is bad timing to provide a Children's Service Worker with a great deal of negative information just before a scheduled court appearance), supervisors should avoid withholding information or opinions indefinitely. Instead, supervisors must find the best way and the best time to address sensitive areas or concerns. The following are "standards" to work toward:

  - Nothing is bad enough to hide; the question is not whether to bring up a topic, but when and how it is best to approach it.

  - The supervisor is an honest person; the worker can trust the supervisor's response.

  - The supervisor has confidence in the worker's ability to handle sensitive situations.

- **Firmness and Consistency**

  Related to the ability to make decisions is the ability to see decisions through. This is not intended to imply rigidity, but rather to indicate the need for carrying out plans with some sense of continuity and stability. Families need this from Children's Service Workers and workers need it from supervisors. If workers cannot have confidence in the supervisor's decision-making ability, they may be unable to extend a sense of commitment to their clients.

- **Empathy**

  The ability to feel what another is feeling - to walk in another's shoes - is a key concept in child protective work. In Supervision, it may mean being able to feel a Children's Service Worker's sense of failure or sense of confidence at succeeding. Child protective work, after all, is people working together, and people experience a broad range of emotional responses. If workers perceive their supervisors' empathy and know how good it makes them feel, they can

more readily extend it to clients who may never have had someone else demonstrate this kind of understanding.

- **Flexibility**

  Plans or decisions which do not prove to be effective or appropriate ought to be changed. It is important for supervisors to demonstrate in interactions with Children's Service Workers that plans can and should be changed, provided it is clear that the change is reasonable. This technique, in turn, should apply to the worker's dealings with clients. Flexibility on the supervisor's part permits the worker to learn two key lessons:

  - It is permissible, even desirable, to admit making a mistake.

  - It is permissible to change plans or approaches.

- **Participatory Leadership**

  The primary concern in this area relates to the need for Children's Service Workers to feel some sense of control over their own lives, although they are aware of the supervisor's ultimate authority. Staff should be involved to whatever extent possible in case decisions and policy making, not just in trivial matters. The staff's advice should be solicited on matters concerning them and their work environment. Of primary importance, workers should be given latitude to disagree with their supervisor and to formulate their own positions on policy and procedures based on the information available to them. The supervisor who interacts with workers in this way will model this behavior for workers, who in turn will be able to increase the capacities of clients to determine their own lives while protecting the rights of others.

Working With Stages of Children's Service Worker Development

In most instances, Children's Service Workers require at least a full year of work before being able to function on an independent level. For this reason, supervisors should anticipate devoting more time to workers during their first year of employment. At this early stage, it is essential to train workers in basic procedures, such as dictating case records immediately after the events occur. As workers develop, less constant and intensive supervision will be required. It is important to remember that workers who have previous social work experience and/or an MSW are likely to become acclimated to the social work process more quickly than untrained workers. One way of looking at the development process is to identify various stages of worker development:

- First stage - a period of high anxiety.

- Second stage - make it or break it.

- Third stage - good assessment skills, rudimentary intervention skills.

- Fourth stage - relative independence.

In general, the amount of supervisory intervention will diminish as the Children's Service Worker passes through these various stages of development.

- **Stage One: The High Anxiety Stage**

  During the first three to six months on the job, exposure to abusive and neglectful families may result in a great deal of confusion. The Children's Service Worker will be searching for information on how to respond and examining personal feelings toward clients. If the supervisor has not effectively set standards and provided guidance, the worker may have a particularly difficult period initially and may feel inadequate to the tasks at hand. While this period is the most difficult for the worker, it is also the time in which the greatest amount of learning can take place. There are several types of interventions which the supervisor can employ to aid in this process.

  Accept and meet Children's Service Worker dependency needs: During phase one, it is appropriate for the worker to seek security and stability from the supervisor. The supervisor can be somewhat more directive than might be appropriate with more experienced workers. Expectations regarding independence at this point are likely to be premature. Frequent reinforcement for positive behaviors, as well as the idea of unconditional caring, are key supervisory guidelines. Just as the supervisor accepts the dependency needs of the worker, the supervisor should encourage them to accept dependency needs of their clients. This is a necessary and positive stage in the clients' treatment.

  Provide factual tools: The supervisor should provide new Children's Service Workers with whatever standards, priorities, and information are required to perform their work function. The supervisor should be assist in recognizing how these standards and priorities relate to specific cases and to intervention. Inexperienced workers need as much structure and specific instruction as they can be given at this stage.

  Accept the confused feelings: The confusion and sense of inadequacy felt by new staff should be viewed as a normal part of their development. If they can see that these feelings are acceptable to the supervisor, they will come to accept them and view them as a natural part of personal and professional development.

  Allow Children's Service Workers to express anxiety: Undoubtedly the worker will be experiencing anxiety over performance and client interactions. These feelings must be elicited. The supervisor must help and encourage expression of this anxiety and provide the necessary acceptance and support to enable

professional development. The supervisor also needs to help the worker sort out realistic anxiety feelings from unrealistic ones.

Constructively assist in identifying mistakes: New staff do not always know when they make mistakes. They have not developed sufficient knowledge and skill to be able to identify gaps in their work performance, and the supervisor will need to assist them in doing so. This should always be done, however, by building on strengths and by discovering ways in which positive qualities can be applied to counteract shortcomings.

Pair new Children's Service Workers with experienced staff: A team system works well in a Treatment Unit. Pairing new staff with experienced ones provides a safety net and, in addition, shows new staff what they can aspire.

Be regularly available for conferences: Beginning with this initial stage, and continuing through the next two stages of development, the supervisor should expect to spend approximately two hours per week with each new Children's Service Worker in individual conferences. In addition, crises and emergencies will arise which will also require time and effort on the part of the supervisor.

Substitute for new Children's Service Workers only in cases of extreme emergency: Workers develop a sense of confidence in themselves and in their own skills by successfully handling emergencies. They need to know that the supervisor will support them and is available if really needed. The supervisor demonstrates confidence in the ability of the worker to handle emergencies by remaining in the background except for those times when intervention is absolutely necessary.

Build caseloads slowly: If possible, for the first month or two limit the number of cases. This allows time for confidence building and reduces pressure.

Clarify client and Children's Service Worker behaviors: Questions asked during supervisory conferences should be directed toward ways in which clients have responded to the worker's behavior. Conferences may also include clarification regarding the reasons clients have responded in this way. Focusing on both client and the worker's behaviors enables staff to be aware of which of their interventions are successful and which need to be changed.

- **Stage Two: The "Make It or Break It" Stage**

  At this level, Children's Service Workers have developed enough knowledge and skill to have some degree of confidence in making plans and decisions. However, they may still experience some anxiety and still have a limited ability to identify mistakes.

The supervisor needs to continue to encourage independence while remaining available to provide a considerable amount of support. Interactions at this stage should be characterized as follows:

Expect and allow some mistakes: Children's Service Workers at this level will begin experimenting with new behaviors in working with clients, and will experience a crisis of confidence if these attempts fail to meet their personal standards. A worker who is beginning to take some risks and who is pressing to learn new things will inevitably make mistakes. The supervisor will need to expect this and to help in accepting these mistakes. If supervisors demonstrate a willingness to accept their own mistakes, they will, at the same time, show that making some mistakes is acceptable and should not be viewed as failure.

Introduce a greater degree of participatory leadership: During the first stage, the supervisor may have needed to be more direct in providing information to the Children's Service Worker. In this second stage, the supervisor should assume that workers have most of the necessary basic knowledge to perform their functions. The supervisor generally needs to help draw this knowledge out. This can be done by presenting alternatives that may not be evident.

Help the Children's Service Worker organize observations and ideas: Workers will now begin to spontaneously identify patterns occurring in families and across caseloads. Similarities will be seen from one case to another. The supervisor should begin to underscore these similarities and permit the worker to synthesize them into some principles of practice.

Analyze intuitions without stifling creativity or spontaneity: As Children's Service Workers in this stage gain confidence, they will begin to operate on hunches, guesses, common sense, and intuition. While these may be more effective than the supervisor might initially suspect, supervisors should assist in validating the intuitions.

- **Stage Three: Mastery of Assessment Skills With Rudimentary Intervention Skills**

At this stage, Children's Service Workers are generally able to identify and analyze errors; basic knowledge has been incorporated and gaps in casework are more apparent to them. In the third phase personal and professional goals are set and the identification of times when their behavior is incompatible with these goals. This is the beginning of independent practice. During this stage, the supervisor can begin to allow the worker to take the initiative in the supervisory process.

Listen carefully: Careful listening is the primary task of the supervisor in relating at this level. Basic listening skills and the ability to identify not only what is said, but what is not said are important. The supervisor may ask clarifying or

informational questions, but the function of the supervisor at this point is to listen first, then to talk.

Identify resistance and discuss it in relation to clients: While resistance may require some attention in earlier stages, it is at this third stage where the supervisor must be certain that any resistance is specifically addressed in supervisory conferences. When the Children's Service Worker is reluctant to deal with certain clients or client behaviors, these behaviors should be discussed specifically in terms of how they affect the relationship with the client. Focusing on the worker's personality or specific characteristics out of the context of client relationships can be detrimental to both the development of the worker and of the worker/supervisor relationship. Attention should be directed to the way in which clients react to intervention, and the worker should be assisted in using personal and professional strengths in overcoming barriers and resistance in the worker/client relationship.

Help identify and examine options: The first plans, intuitions, and perceptions of a Children's Service Worker on a case may or may not be the best way to proceed. While the supervisor may tend to agree with the options or ideas presented, it is essential to open up as many options as possible. This should be done in such a way that the worker may still come back to the first option if it is the best one. The very nature of the process of option exploration in and of itself will assist in identifying options for other clients and in expanding the ability to work effectively with a variety of clients and cases.

- **Stage Four: Relative Independence**

At this stage, Children's Service Workers can identify problems and options and generally can determine most of the agenda for supervisory conferences. They should have a good idea of their own supervisory needs and should have a sense of what is needed to promote further professional development. Supervisory conferences can be scheduled less frequently. The supervisory role at this point is more that of a consultant and colleague than that of an authority figure, although the worker will always be subject to supervisory direction. The most critical supervisory function at this stage is to assist in clarifying professional development and in identifying learning needs. A serious mistake is made when the supervisor or the worker begins to assume that the ability to function independently and autonomously somehow marks the end of the need for learning and growing. Failure of the worker to continue to learn and grow may well result in "burnout." The supervisor can assist in identifying resources and opportunities for continuing education and development.

Enhancement of Children's Service Worker Skills

Beyond the formal means of developing the professional capacities of staff, such as continuing education and establishing and encouraging the use of a unit or agency library, there are some general supervisory skills that, if used on a day-to-day basis, will lead to professional growth. The following material presents some guiding principles for this type of supervisory behavior. This material also identifies several stages of normal development that the supervisor can use as a measure of the staff's current level of development. This scheme can serve as a needs assessment tool for future developmental activities.

The wisdom of building case plans on the basis of family strengths is a widely accepted dictum of social work practice. As a corollary, it is true that effective supervision builds on staff strengths. While each supervisor will develop special techniques for assisting the Children's Service Worker in taking advantage of the individual strengths which he/she bring to the job, there are a number of suggestions which may be useful to any supervisor:

- **Give suggestions, not prescriptions**. Children's Service Workers should be assisted in identifying as many options as possible for dealing with a specific case problem, in analyzing these options in terms of the potential risks and benefits, and in selecting the "best" option based on the strengths of both the worker and the family.

- **Note and acknowledge accomplishments**. Supervisory conferences should always include recognition from the supervisor for something which the Children's Service Worker has done well. The accomplishments should be pointed out, and the supervisor can then assist in identifying ways in which the strengths evidenced by these accomplishments can be translated into problem-solving strategies in more difficult areas.

- **Enable Children's Service Workers to assess and be responsible for personal learning needs.** The supervisor should ask the worker to assess his/her own learning needs and to assume responsibility for fulfilling them. Workers generally acknowledge that clients probably will not change until they see a real need to do so. The same is true for workers. By encouraging identification of specific areas where improvement is needed, the supervisor can then be in a position to assist in developing learning strategies for overcoming weaknesses. This is much more successful than if the supervisor sets a goal for the worker's development which the worker may not accept.

- **Avoid the role of being a "therapist."** The task of the supervisor is not to serve as therapist to staff with personal problems, but rather to focus on the professional development. However, in situations where personal problems affect work performance, the supervisor needs to discuss them with the Children's Service Worker in a caring way.

- **Don't carry cases by "remote control."** Once in the field, the Children's Service Worker is responsible for the case although the supervisor should provide some basic guidelines. Trying to provide the worker with a set of detailed instructions on specific cases undermines self-confidence and conveys a general feeling of mistrust in his/her ability to effectively handle the case.

- **Supervise on the basis of Children's Service Worker skills as well as case needs.** Staff have a variety of strengths and weaknesses and each person functions at different levels of professional development. Supervisors should encourage workers to draw their own conclusions about cases. Suggestions for case plans should be offered only when needed. Workers should be encouraged to capitalize on their strengths and skills in making case decisions and implementing plans. Since workers function at different levels of competency, supervision should be geared to the workers' level of functioning.

- **Enable workers to identify various stages of intervention.** Child abuse and neglect cases sometimes become so complex that they often seem overwhelming. In order to overcome this sense of futility, Children's Service Workers must be assisted in reducing cases to their component parts and viewing the intervention process as essentially a step-by-step procedure. Change should be viewed as occurring in increments, rather than all at once. When workers view a case in this way, they can help clients to assess their own progress on a step-by-step basis, thus making the entire process more amendable to success.

- **Teach the worker individual case management techniques.** Staff should be taught to focus on individual cases. It is necessary for Children's Service Workers to learn: how to formulate realistic goals and tasks, how to communicate them clearly and concisely in writing, and to the family, how to implement the treatment plan effectively, and how to assess whether the goals are being achieved.

- **Prepare Children's Service Workers for supervision.** A very important function for the supervisor is to prepare staff to be promoted to supervisory positions within the agency. Supervisors can do this by avoiding complete supervisory autonomy and by allowing workers to make their own decisions based on all relevant information available. The supervisor should also designate a senior worker who is responsible for supervision when the supervisor is absent from the unit.

Supervisory Conferences

Schedule weekly conferences as well as conferences on demand. With highly experienced staff, the supervisor should be providing consultation on demand and emotional support. To do more is to perpetuate unnecessary dependency which may be

transferred to clients. Don't provide "coffee shop" supervision which is idle chit-chat about cases and feelings.

The supervisor should learn to relax and not be a slave to drop-in or quickie supervision. Clients' values should not be lost by allowing discussion of cases anywhere in the office. If the discussion involves too many cases discussed quickly, the supervisor may relate the wrong case to the wrong situation and give the wrong advise.

The supervisor should protect him/herself by providing staff a schedule of times for supervisory conferences. Except in "life and death situations," staff should stick to these conference times. If the Children's Service Worker does not stick to the time and it's the first occurrence (and it's not a life and death situation), he/she should be allowed to discuss the case. The worker should be reminded at the end of the conference that he/she missed the scheduled conference time. The supervisor should point out that it is his/her job to help staff learn to manage their time and that the worker is expected to come to the conference at the regular time in the future. The supervisor should resist the worker's pattern to disrupt other conferences.

Selection of New Workers

The following guidelines are presented for supervisors to use during the selection of new staff.

- **Behavioral Interviewing**

  This type of interviewing is based on the idea that job related situations from the past predict future behavior. Don't ask about hypothetical experiences in the future. Think of the most difficult situation of its kind and describe it. Ask an applicant if they have had to respond to similar past situations.

  Study the job description and list both the technical and performance skills. Develop job related situations around these skills and ask questions in the form of open-ended questions.

  Consider asking questions along the following lines:

  1. What is your willingness and ability to follow agency procedures? Can you give an example of where you found it necessary to ignore agency procedures and why?

  2. Can you give an example of when communicating with a client was difficult?

  3. Can you describe a quick decision that you have made that you are proud of?

Ask about the following issues:

Have you achieved an important goal in the past? How do you access your ability to roll with the punches? Describe a difficult job that you have had and an uninteresting job. Have you had to structure your own work schedule and how have you handled it? What do you do in a situation where upper level decision holds up your progress?

- **Tips for the Supervisor**

In interviews, be comfortable allowing time even when there are pauses. Be patient and don't be afraid of silence. Even people with no prior job skills have life experiences which can indicate how they have handled situations. This is especially true of organizational abilities and managing finances. It is important to establish rapport and to put the applicant at ease. Take notes and explain why. Ask for specific examples of past behavior and use your system and ask for specifics until you get the kind of details that you want. Ask them to tell you exactly how they have handled this situation rather than generalizing about an event. If an applicant is rambling and drifting from topic to topic and doesn't give you a chance to ask a question, begin talking along with them and eventually they will stop to listen to you and you can direct the conversation back to the topic you want.

If you appear to be getting a one-sided picture either good or bad, ask questions which would give you contrary evidence about the applicant. For example, ask for an example of when an applicant followed expected procedure when it would have been easier to alter their policy or ask the applicant to tell you when they have had a problem with decisiveness.

No interview should be complete without asking the applicant to discuss what they consider their areas of strengths and the areas they need to improve.

- **Interpersonal Indicators of Good Children's Service Workers**

1. How do they feel about authority? It's important to ask directly and find out what experiences people have had with using authority. Can they accept authority? How would they implement the agency authority to intervene with a family?

2. What is the person's ability to be direct and honest in discussing problems?

3. How consistent is the person?

4, Stability and emotional maturity. (Dress may be a good indicator)

5. Degree of firmness and persistence.

6. Ability to accept the client as an individual rather than acting only to the client's behavior.

7. Motivation to learn about the community and resources.

8. Ability to work with suspicious, distrustful clients - ask how he/she has dealt with a person who lies.

Workers Experiencing Difficulties

Supervisors must have enough concern for clients' well-being that they are willing to work with Children's Service Workers who are having difficulty. All of these areas require time and training by the supervisor to help the worker learn how to address these problems.

- **Problems Which Occur Due To A Supervisor's Lack of Training:**

  1. The Children's Service Worker may try to overdirect clients by talking too much. If the worker does this in supervisory conferences, he/she will do so in client contacts. Workers do this because they are anxious and had no interviewing skills.

  2. A lack of focus in interviews with clients and in supervisory conferences is indicated by the worker talking about too many different areas randomly. He/she does this because no one has taught him/her how to focus on a few areas and how to decide what areas are important.

  3. A lack of clarity in thinking about cases and answering questions is exhibited.

  4. A worker projects a hasty, haphazard, or unfocused approach to casework. He/she closes cases quickly because doesn't know what to do in a case or on the opposite extreme, focuses on a limited area for an extended period of time because he/she doesn't know what other areas to concentrate on.

- **Indicators That A Children's Service Worker May Be Having Difficulties**

  1. The inability to discriminate and generalize even though the supervisor has spent time teaching this.

  2. Inter-personal difficulty. The Children's Service Worker holds grudges, stays upset with other staff within and outside the agency.

3. Intra-personal difficulty. The worker intellectualizes his/her inappropriate handling of cases. For example, he/she claims the client is resisting but he/she has had only one client contact in four weeks or complains that the supervisor won't tell him/her what to do. The worker always blames others and is self-righteous in his/her comments.

4. It is important to make the worker do some level of self-evaluation when discussing his/her strengths and weaknesses. If he/she resists this, then he/she is likely to have an inability or unwillingness to help clients develop the skill to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.

5. The worker hasn't seen his/her clients or avoids certain clients, due to sex, race, type of problem, etc. He/she avoids organizational jobs such as recording monthly statistics, meetings with the supervisor and unit.

The Principles of Providing Feedback

"Feedback" is a way of helping another person to consider changing his/her behavior. It is communication to an individual (or group) which gives information about how he/she affects others. Feedback helps an individual keep his/her behavior "on target" and thus better achieve goals. Criteria for useful feedback:

- **It should be descriptive rather than evaluative.** By describing one's own reaction, it leaves the individual free to use it or not to use it as he/she sees fit. Avoiding evaluative language reduces the need for the individual to react defensively.

- **It should be specific rather than general**. To be told that one is "dominating" will probably not be as useful as to be told that, "Just now when we were deciding the issue, you did not listen to what others said, and I felt forced to accept your arguments or face attack from you."

- **It should take into account the needs of both the receiver and giver of feedback**. Feedback can be destructive when it serves only the sender's needs and fails to consider the needs of the person on the receiving end.

- **It should be directed toward behavior which the receiver can do something about.** Frustration is only increased when a person is reminded of some shortcoming over which he/she has no control.

- **It should be solicited, rather than imposed.** Feedback is most useful when the receiver has formulated the kind of question which those observing him/her can answer.

- **It should be well-timed.** In general, feedback is most useful at the earliest opportunity after the given behavior (depending, of course, on the person's readiness to hear it, support available from others, etc.).

- **It should be checked to ensure clear communication**. One way of doing this is to have the receiver try to rephrase the feedback he/she has received to see if it corresponds to what the sender had in mind.

The Principles of Positive Criticism

- **It is desirable to approve, affirm and give staff as much recognition as possible**. Although everyone needs positive criticism, it is important to note that some Children's Service Workers cannot function without constant support and approval from the supervisor. In such cases, approval and recognition are required to sustain motivation. It becomes highly questionable that such a person could ever achieve independence from an ever increasing dependency on the supervisor.

- **As a general rule, positive criticism is usually given more freely than negative criticism**. It must be valid not artificial. If positive criticism is used invalidly, it can have a negative effect.

- **Convey the positives in the Children's Service Worker's performance and show enthusiasm over improvement.** Always recognize when the basic needs of the clients are being met rather than personalizing comments to the staff person. Do not hesitate to compare recent work with previous activity because this tends to stimulate self-criticism.

- **Some Children's Service Workers seem to need the supervisor's permission to praise themselves**. They will focus on their social orientation rather than on their service orientation to clients. For example, "I don't know why I have trouble relating to Mr. X. I always get along well with everybody." The two are not comparable and the supervisor must take it out of the social arena and keep it focused on the professional aspects of the job.

- **Workers must know where they stand and how they are doing as they progress on the job**. No single factor contributes more to job dissatisfaction than not knowing how we're doing until evaluation time. Then, negatives in the performance can be overwhelming. Workers must have a general understanding and objectivity about what went wrong in their cases at the time it happened.

- **Supervisors must resist striving for personal success in their staff's cases**. The supervisor should not be threatened professionally by lack of improvement in staff performance once he/she has done all he/she can to help.

The Principles of Negative Criticism Given in a Positive Way

Negative criticism is received with less hostility, and in fact can provide developing staff security on the job if the supervisor:

- **Has an attitude as one of giving help** by defining the problem, the problem-solving situations, and concentrating on giving help.

- **Has professional values that are oriented to the norm and not to individuals.** Never use another Children's Service Worker as an example of professional competence. Never compare one worker's capability to another.

- **Has realistic expectations of competence** and quality of performance which is related to an agency-wide standard.

- **Elicits self-criticism** and provides affirmation and supplementation of the supervisee's self-criticism.

- **Identifies the components of the negatives** and deals with them one at a time to provide a basis for change. Never generalize negatives.

- **Deals with negatives in the allotted supervisory period**. They should not be given in an emotionally charged situation, a crisis, or when staff is under particular stress. Wait for a more suitable time.

SELF ASSESSMENT OF SUPERVISORY SKILLS

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest score and 1 the lowest) for each of the following statements:

1. I share responsibility in and provide support to my workers for difficult case decisions. _____

2. I help my workers deal with problems they face in their work with clients. _____

3. I help my workers deal with their professional development. _____

4. I provide my workers with stimulation in thinking about social work practice and theory. _____

5. I provide my workers with critical feed back to enable them to understand what they are doing wrong and make appropriate changes. _____

6. I provide my workers with the emotional support they need to do their job more effectively. _____

7. I provide my workers with some sense of agency appreciation of their
8. work. _____

8. I help my workers feel a sense of belonging to the agency. _____

9. I help my workers grow toward greater maturity as persons. _____

10. I encourage my workers to take their own initiative and to become more autonomous in their practice. _____

11. I am able to set priorities among my many tasks. _____

12. I provide my workers with sufficient regularly scheduled, uninterrupted conference time. _____

13. I make myself available to workers. _____

14. I encourage the use of peer review and support. _____

Sources:

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MEMORANDA HISTORY: